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ABSTRACT

This document provides guidelines for the process of moderation and verification of assessments for educators involved in adult education. As used in the education establishment in Australia, "moderation" is the process of ensuring the standardization of assessment. Through the moderation process, assessment procedures conducted in a variety of locations and by a variety of providers can be standardized to maintain the integrity of the credentials awarded. The guide is organized in eight sections. Following the first two sections, which explain what moderation is and the background of its use, the third section provides information on setting up the moderation system. It discusses planning and management issues for providers and includes an operational checklist. The fourth section provides a glimpse of the moderation system in action. It covers practical issues for providers and teachers/tutors/trainers, the moderation sessions, and some key questions about moderation. The fifth section contains information about moderation and assessment; the sixth section defines benchmark material and discusses its role in moderation. The final two sections are a glossary defining seven terms and an appendix providing guidelines for regional councils of adult, community, and further education. (KC)

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ED 387 700

MODERATION IN THE CERTIFICATES OF GENERAL EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

GUIDELINES FOR PROVIDERS

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Adult Education in the Community

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Adult, Community and Further Education Board

This document was produced as a result of a project funded by the Adult, Community and Further Education Board and conducted by the Victoria University of Technology, in association with Western Metropolitan Regional Council of Adult, Community and Further Education, the Council of Adult Education, and Adult Migrant Education Services.

The aim of the project was to develop a statement of principles and operational guidelines for the process of moderation and verification of assessments for the Certificates of General Education for Adults. Accreditation for the Certificates is premised on provider-managed processes of moderation and verification. In order to to be eligible to award the credentials of the Certificate, providers are required to ensure their teachers/tutors/trainers participate in processes of moderation and verification of assessments.

This document has been endorsed by the Adult, Community and Further Education Board.

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MODERATION IN THE CERTIFICATES OF GENERAL EDUCATION FOR ADULTS: GUIDELINES FOR REGIONAL COUNCILS OF ADULT, COMMUNITY AND FURTHER EDUCATION.

1. INTRODUCTION

Moderation : what is it ?

Moderation is the process of ensuring the standardisation of assessment. Through the moderation process, assessment procedures conducted in a variety of locations and by a variety of providers can be standardised to maintain the integrity of the credentials awarded.

Moderation helps education and training providers to apply and interpret standards within a credential in the same way. It allows us to verify that assessment processes and decisions, particularly those critical to the attainment of credentials, are **valid** and **consistent** - that is that they assess fairly what they are meant to assess and are reliable. It also provides us with the opportunity to carry out critical routine reviews of assessment procedures of the curriculum and of the standards embodied in the credential.

The moderation system proposed to support the Certificates of Education for Adults (the CGE for Adults) ensures protection for the rights of individual students to fair, valid and reliable assessment and is based on the notion of re-inforcing success in learning. In addition, because it regularly examines assessment procedures and decisions and the underlying goals and standards embodied in the credential, the moderation system protects the integrity of the credential itself.

Moderation in the CGE for Adults

As outlined in the *"Moderation in the Certificates of General Education for Adults: Guidelines for Regional Councils of Adult, Community and Further Education"* document, (Appendix) moderation for the CGE for Adults will comprise two types of meetings which will be attended by practitioners teaching on programs leading to credentials within the CGE for Adults structure. The two types of meetings are:

- Moderation Procedures and Processes which will normally occur at the beginning of every semester. This session which is common to all streams covers practices necessary to develop consistency in benchmarking, sampling and recording and in interpreting standards and designing assessments across all streams.

- Moderation for Verification is the specific process which ratifies assessments carried out for credentialling purposes. There are normally four such sessions at the end of each semester - one for each stream, across all levels.

Using these guidelines

These guidelines are intended primarily for use by education and training providers which are planning to set up or already offering courses leading to credentials under the CGE for Adults. They may also be of more general use to providers seeking to improve quality in overall adult basic education provision, or those concerned with the development of assessment practices in adult education or with the development of staff training programs.

These guidelines are meant to be read in conjunction with the Administrative Guidelines in Section 5 of the *Certificates of General Education for Adults*, within the Victorian Adult English Language Literacy & Numeracy Accreditation Framework, published by the Adult, Community and Further Education Board and State Training Board Victoria in 1993 (page 207).

2. BACKGROUND

Competence based accreditation

Education and training programs are increasingly being designed with specific, clearly defined learning outcomes termed **competencies.** These are explicit statements of observable outcomes that can be demonstrated by the student to clearly defined **performance criteria** and levels. The CGE for Adults comprises two such competence based credentials, the Certificate of General Education for Adults (Foundation) and the Certificate of General Education for Adults. The competencies with the performance criteria and **range and conditions** define the **standards** which the student must demonstrate to gain the credential.

A competency based credential, like the CGE for Adults can comprise all or part of a program or course. If it is a part of a program, other learning outcomes may be differently defined and assessed. To gain the credentials of the CGE for Adults - (certificate(s) or statement(s) of attainment) - all the requirements of the credential must be met, regardless of whatever else comprises the program.

Assessment and Moderation

Assessment, in an education and training context, is the term used to cover the range of processes used to define, measure or describe the learning progress and achievement of the student. Assessment will normally encompass development of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values and may occur at any stage of the learning process. It is used to place students into an appropriate learning program, to provide information about ongoing progress, as a record of achievement after undertaking a program, and to provide required information necessary for the award of a credential.

Moderation is the process which ensures that the assessment activities undertaken in any education or training program are valid and consistent. In other words they assess what they are designed to assess, (ie they are **valid**), and that they give reliable and accurate results, (ie they are **consistent**).

Moderation in the CGE for Adults : some key concepts and terms

Validity of Assessment: that the assessment procedures used are appropriate and assess what they are intended to assess.

Reliability of Assessment: that the interpretation of educational goals and standards of the CGE for Adults are consistent across the State and across all providers.

Fairness: that the individual interests of students are protected by a thorough and continuous review of assessment decisions and through this by ongoing discussion about the underlying curriculum, which must be designed to allow the student to develop the competencies.

Agreed Variation : that a degree of **variation** in assessment is inevitable. Moderation enables this variation to be identified and limited to what is acceptable by consensus. It can also indicate, by revealing and examining significant variation, the need for review and possible change of the standards or goals of the credential.

Accountability : that students are participating in programs which meet requirements of accrediting authorities as described in accredited curriculum documents.

Roles of participants in CGE for Adults moderation

Regional Councils of Adult, Community and Further Education

The responsibilties of the Regional Councils of ACFE include:

- providing the operational framework for the establishment of regional moderation systems, including setting up regional (external) moderation sessions and maintaining data about the moderation requirements of providers within the region,
- monitoring the operation of such systems within their region and providing feedback as required, and
- ensuring the recording of moderation systems established under their auspices.

Provider Management

The responsibilities of the providers include:

- setting up any necessary moderation policies and practices within their organisation including facilitating the attendance of teaching staff at moderation sessions, internal or external,
- ensuring resource and staff time is available for moderation activities,
- ensuring adherence to administrative and other requirements of the CGE for Adults determined by accreditation authorities, by agreement with their funding bodies or with Regional Councils of ACFE,
- ensuring that student records are maintained to fulfil assessment and moderation requirements,
- registering their moderation needs and arrangements with Regional Councils of ACFE, and

- supporting teachers/tutors/trainers in using the feedback from moderation sessions (internal and external) to improve practice.

Teaching Staff

The responsibilities of teaching staff include:

- ensuring the appropriateness and effectiveness of assessment activities used in their courses,
- adhering to any agreed common assessment policies and practices within their organisation,
- participating in moderation activities as required and providing **feedback** of relevant information from such sessions,
- maintaining agreed records of student progress to supplement and inform assessments as required,
- providing assessment records and sample assessments as required for moderation purposes,
- providing students with all information needed to ensure their full understanding of the assessment process and the requirements and structure of the certificates, and
- ensuring that the curriculum they use allows students to fully develop and demonstrate the skills required for credentials.

Students

Students through an active involvement in their own learning and through self assessment:

- can partner their teachers/tutors/trainers, taking a critical role in initiating and confirming significant assessment processes, and
- have the right to request re-assessment.

3. SETTING UP THE MODERATION SYSTEM

3.1 PLANNING & MANAGEMENT ISSUES FOR PROVIDERS

Funding

- Financial resources for teaching staff to participate in moderation activities should be incorporated in course costings and need to be identified at an early stage in course design.
- . The resources required need to cover teaching staff's time and possibly travelling expenses.

Staff

- Sufficient staff time to operate the system should be allocated in drawing up duties of teaching staff likely to be involved.

- Requirements for attendance at moderation sessions need to be made clear to teaching staff.
- Time for moderation should be built into the semester program of activities.
- Provider assessment policies need to be made clear to all teaching staff.
- Managers should ensure that maximum benefit is gained from the moderation activities and structure, through a regular evaluation of the system.
- Teaching staff nominated to participate in external regional moderation activities need time and support to feedback information to the internal "team".
- At least one teacher from a provider operating an internal system should be available to represent the provider at external regional moderation sessions.

Choice of system

- Providers can choose between operating an internal moderation system or working within the regional system.
- Large providers with a number of staff teaching CGE for Adults courses will have little difficulty in establishing a viable internal moderation "team".
- Smaller providers with few staff and isolated teachers/tutors/trainers, eg those operating singly in a workplace situation or in a rural area, are advised to become part of a local, sub-regional or the regional system.

Professional development

- Participants within the moderation system will need training in the operation of moderation and in assessment.
- Providers are advised to consult with other providers and with staff of Regional Councils of ACFE on the arrangement of suitable professional development activities.

Internal moderation systems

If internal moderation is to occur, there are a number of issues to be considered. These include:

- who will be responsible for organising the sessions ?
- who will be involved in moderation ?
- who will be responsible for liaison with the Regional Council of ACFE or regional office staff ?
- what other external agents, if any, are to be involved ?
- how will the sessions operate and what moderation activities are to be used ?
- how will information about the system and individual sessions be circulated internally ?
- who will evaluate the system internally ?
- how will moderation activities and outcomes be recorded ?
- how will information from moderation activities be fed back into internal policy and practice?
- how is moderation to be resourced
- who will attend regional moderation sessions ?

Internal consultation and discussion with staff of Regional Councils of ACFE and other providers should help individual providers set up a system in harmony with others within the region and statewide.

3.2 OPERATIONAL CHECKLIST FOR USE OF PROVIDERS

Step One

- Review provision for semester and determine moderation requirements
- Ensure moderation duties included in teachers/tutors/trainers' contracts (where appropriate)
- Allocate provisional dates for any internal moderation activities and circulate to teaching staff
- Register moderation needs/arrangements with the Regional Council of ACFE
- Ensure staff/students have information re moderation - its function, the nature of moderation sessions and the roles individuals play within the system
- Ensure that teaching staff are familiar with any internal assessment policies and/or practice

Step Two

- Confirm regional moderation dates with the Regional Council of ACFE.
- If moderation arrangements are to be internal, confirm at least one nominated participant for attendance at external (regional) moderation sessions and arrange procedure for feedback to colleagues.
- Confirm participation of any teaching staff in convenor or facilitator roles and clarify task, internally and with Regional Council, as appropriate.
- Negotiate any practical arrangements for moderation sessions.
- Set up system for collecting relevant information and samples for use and reference in moderation sessions.

Step Three

- Ensure that all staff teaching courses leading to certification attend during the semester:
  - one moderation processes and procedures session.
  - one moderation for verification session per stream taught.
- Ensure that all such staff have access to external moderation, either by personal participation or by consultation with provider-nominated participant(s) at regional moderation session(s).
- Ensure that all students presenting for credentials are assessed.
- Issue credentials, after the moderation for verification session.
  - Community based providers **only** - certify to the Regional Council of ACFE that all requirements regarding moderation, curriculum and assessment have been met according to theGuidelines in the Certificate of General Education for Adults.
- Record any student appeals against assessment.

Step Four

- If appropriate, ensure member of teaching staff attends semester inter-regional moderation meeting.
- Make sure that feedback from inter-regional moderation meetings is available to staff through staff meetings and/or professional development.

4. THE MODERATION SYSTEM IN ACTION

4.1 PRACTICAL ISSUES FOR PROVIDERS & TEACHERS/TUTORS/TRAINERS

When does moderation happen ?

Timings of moderation activities should be decided at the beginning of the program, giving teaching staff time to collect material and do any other preparation work. There are two types of reguiar moderation sessions related to the CGE for Adults:

Moderation Procedures and Processes

The **Moderation Procedures and Processes** session will normally take place at the beginning of the semester. There will be one "moderation procedures and processes" session per semester.

This session provides an opportunity for staff to discuss planning for verification sessions; look at samples of student material and assessment tasks across any level or levels and any stream or streams; and provides an opportunity to discuss underlying curriculum issues and the credential design. This session also provides the opportunity to examine benchmark material, ie material which displays the standards in an exemplary or innovative way.

Moderation for Verification

Moderation for Verification occurs usually at the end of the semester, before credentials are issued. There will be four "moderation for verification" sessions - one for each stream, per semester.

These sessions provide the opportunity for the review of assessment decisions and the design of associated assessment tasks within a specific curriculum stream, at any level. The timing and content of the sessions should meet the needs of teaching staff and students, and be consistent with the organisation of courses and certification procedures.

Moderation sessions will occur **internally** ie within a provider or **externally**, ie regionally.

Regional moderation sessions, open to all providers, will be organised under the auspices of the Regional Council of ACFE. If providers are organising internal sessions they should have the same focus and be normally 0arranged in the same way as the external system - ie at the beginning and end of the semester. Providers operating an internal system should send at least one teacher, representing the provider, to regional sessions. Some providers might choose to integrate moderation for CGE for Adults into modified routine staff meetings.

There will also be regular **inter-regional statewide moderation sessions**, where standards interpretation in assessment of students' work and assessment design, and benchmark material will be discussed. These sessions also provide the opportunity for discussion and recommendations regarding the credential and its operation to be passed on to the Course Monitoring and Evaluation Committee. Four **facilitators** from each region will attend these sessions. These will be nominated from within the region. There will be one for each stream within the Certificate.

How will the sessions be organised ?

Moderation sessions, whether internal or external will follow similar patterns.

While the responsibility for setting up regional moderation sessions rests with the Regional Council of ACFE, the moderation system is provider and practitioner driven, and additional specific responsibilities rest with providers and with individuals.

Individuals are likely to be asked to contribute **informally** to the operation of the system, by taking on particular tasks, on a shared basis. These specific tasks include: convening groups, leading discussions and recording outcomes of sessions.

What is moderated ?

Materials derived from assessment activities will be used in moderation. These consist of students' work which has been assessed. This will be work deemed to be a final and independent product, and should include the guidelines and instructions given to the student together with all relevant details of the associated assessment task.

Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting material for use in moderation sessions. For obvious practical reasons not all material will be or needs to be moderated - and a sample is used. Decisions about the size of sample and the kind of material should be made before the session. Because sessions are relatively short the sample size, per teacher or per provider, will be small, perhaps only as many as two to four samples.

Sample size will be dictated by the time available for moderation and the size of the group.

Those participating will need to know what kind of sample to bring or circulate beforehand, in good time to identify and prepare them.

Sampling should be done in confidence so that the sample is a true reflection of the quality, accuracy and characteristics of the assessments of an individual assessor or of the assessments of a provider. This is irrespective of assessor, course design, delivery method or location.

In practice, providers will be offering a whole range of different programs leading to credentials - some for example will be offering only two streams at two levels, some all streams at two levels, some all streams at all levels. These considerations as well as the need to keep the sampling process manageable, should guide decisions about sample size and focus.

Sampling might focus on :

- a particular level,
- a particular stream or domain(s) within that stream,
- integrated programs at specified levels.

Preparation of the sample

Each sample of student work should include a note of the assessment given, ie the competencies from the stream(s) and element(s) the student is deemed to have demonstrated, together with details of the instructions given to the student. The associated assessment task details should include a brief breakdown of the design of the task which indicates the key factors, including achievement targets, task description, any assistance given and resources provided.

Suggestions for ways of annotating samples are given in the examples of material on page 10 **SAMPLE OF STUDENT MATERIAL ANNOTATED FOR USE IN A MODERATION SESSION** and **SAMPLE OF A SUMMARY SHEET - ASSESSMENT TASK FOR USE IN A MODERATION SESSION**.

Checklist for ensuring the smooth running of the moderation session

This checklist can be used for both internal and regional moderation sessions.

- Is there information on the CGE for Adults activities (courses, size and type of program etc) of the participants available ?

  Has the agenda for the session been decided ?

- Are convenor and/or facilitator(s) identified to lead the session and have they agreed to carry out these roles and been briefed on what is required of them ?

- Has someone been nominated to make a record of the session for reporting back to the Regional Council of ACFE ?

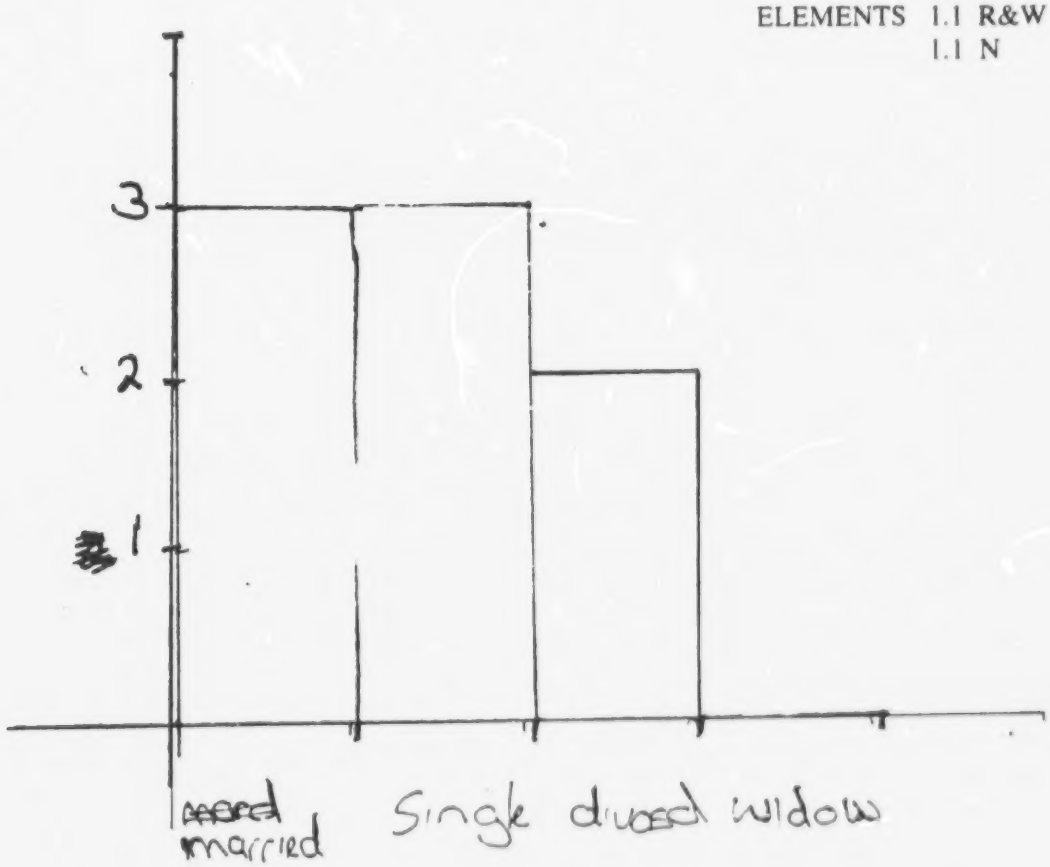
- Do participants have information about the type and focus of sample material required ?

- Do participants have information about any necessary annotating of material for presentation at the session ?

SAMPLE OF MATERIAL ANNOTATED FOR USE IN A MODERATION SESSION

STUDENT MATERIAL

STREAM(S) R&W
Numerical
ELEMENTS 1.1 R&W
1.1 N



There are 8 students in class

This shows if we maried

Instructions given to student : To interpret data and represent on a bar chart. Add own annotation and write briefly about what it represents.

SAMPLE OF SUMMARY SHEET - ASSESSMENT TASK FOR USE IN A MODERATION SESSION

Description of Task

Student given task of creating a simple bar chart using own choice of data and writing one or two sentences about it.

Competency Target(s) Stream(s)	**Element(s)**
Numerical and Math	*1.1*
Reading and Writing	*1.1*

Have performance criteria been met and range & conditions covered ?

Yes

Outcome (what the student is expected to produce)

Own annotated bar chart using familiar material. with written tex/heading

Teacher assistance (if any)

None at this stage

Resources available

- *Dictionary*
- *Own file with material for reference including work on bar charts done previously in class. All reference material in class library.*

4.2 THE MODERATION SESSIONS

Outline of a typical moderation session - Moderation Procedures and Processes

The group will need a nominated chairperson or convenor and recorder.

The session might include the following:

- a moderation exercise with a selected sample of material,
- process and procedures planning for future moderation for verification sessions,
- a review of benchmark material (see Section 6),
- issues of interest and concern regarding the credential standards - supported by material,
- feedback from regional facilitators.

Outline of a typical moderation session - Moderation for Verification

- The group will need a convenor or chairperson.
- Group size will vary but groups larger than 10 will be difficult to manage. Large groups may need to be split into sub-groups.
- Participants bring multiple copies of a pre-determined sample of pre-assessed student material and the associated assessment task design details to the session.

The session might operate as follows :

- The material is handed round (or previously circulated).
- Taking each sample in turn participants are asked if they agree with the assessment given and confirm the effectiveness of the assessment task design.
- Those who do not agree explain why they disagree.
- Joint discussion focuses on the sample material and the standards which it demonstrates.
- Participants then have a chance to change their opinion.
- The convenor seeks a majority decision for each piece.
- If a majority decision is not reached further follow up on the piece of work in question or the assessment tasks linked to it may be required.
- A note is made of the decision come to by the group.
- The record is passed on to the person responsible for referring the report back to the Regional Council of ACFE.
- Samples are kept if required.

The convenor will need to ensure that:

- all material is considered **only** in relation to the standards of the credential, not in comparison to other pieces,
- samples are considered one at a time,
- if the group is "bogged down" a time limit for discussion is agreed, and the group moves on to the next sample,
- the group understands that its purpose is moderation, not assessment,
- a period of time is left at the end of the session for discussion of issues arising or issues brought for discussion.

It may be difficult to circulate non-text material eg audio and video tapes, photographic and other material prior to the meeting, especially since it may only exist in one copy.

Recording and acting on the outcomes of moderation sessions

The decisions of the group regarding the samples brought to the session will need to be formally, as well as informally recorded. Informal individual records will help participants to feed back information to their colleagues or into their own practice. In internal moderation sessions, feedback should be immediately available to all staff or for direct reference back to individual teachers/tutors/trainers. Any agreed significant issues should be noted for internal discussion and action, or for reference back to the external regional sessions.

The feedback from the external regional session will be reported to the Regional Council, which note the information and in some instances act on it. This action will take a number of forms depending on the nature of the information,

The Regional Council of ACFE may:

- refer discussion to inter-regional moderation sessions through the **facilitators,**
- pass on significant comments directly to Course Monitoring and Evaluation Committee.

SAMPLE PROFORMA FOR RECORDING FINDINGS OF MODERATION SESSIONS

Region (Provider) **Date** **Stream**

SAMPLES

	1	2	3	4	5
PROVIDER A					
B					
C					
D					
E					
F					
G					
H					
I					
J					

4.3 SOME KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT MODERATION

- **What is the difference between assessment and moderation ?**

Assessment refers to the processes we use to determine and describe students' progress. Moderation is the process we use to ensure that the assessment processes we use and the decisions we come to are reliable and fair.

- **Who does the assessment and the moderation ?**

Staff who conduct the CGE for Adults courses carry out both the assessment of their students and, together in groups, the moderation.

- **How will information from the moderation sessions be circulated and who will make sure that it is acted on ?**

The moderation system relies on the commitment and willingness of individual teachers/tutors/trainers and of providers to use and share information and to act on recommendations to change practice if necessary. Formal responsibility for receiving the record of regional moderation sessions rests with the Regional Council of ACFE. Regional facilitators will take some of the issues raised in regional meetings to the inter-regional statewide sessions for discussion and guidance.

- **What records do I have to keep for moderation purposes ?**

Moderation is concerned with interpretations of the credential standard, therefore, for moderation purposes, teachers/tutors/trainers should keep records of when and how students demonstrated the competencies, and the associated assessment tasks.

With these records teaching staff will be able to locate material to take to moderation sessions.

- **How much material do I have to take to a moderation session ?**

Obviously not all material can be moderated, so you will be asked to bring to the session only a representative sample of material. You will be told how much and what type of material to bring. This will be normally a sample of not more than 2 or 3 pieces. These will be samples of assessed student work and associated assessment tasks.

- **How many pieces of an individual student's work will be moderated ?**

As the material is a sample only, some students' work may never appear at a moderation session. However all students should retain their work in a folio, in support of their claim to a credential.

- **How much student work should I keep ?**

You should keep key pieces, such as "benchmark" pieces, that demonstrate the standards in a particularly complete or innovative way. Your record of students' competency attainment should provide you with sufficient information to locate specific pieces of student work as you require them, however, in some circumstances, teachers/tutors/trainers may wish to keep a portfolio of students' work in addition to the folios kept by students themselves.

- **How many times does the student have to demonstrate the competencies or elements ?**

There is no recommended number of "demonstrations" required within the CGE for Adults, but as a general recommendation you would be looking for competent, independent performance that the student can transfer to another context. Both you and your student might want to make sure that the skill can be transferred, and would therefore look for evidence in more than one situation or task.

- **Can I include in my "record of competency" for my students evidence supplied by others, as well as my own assessments ?**

Your student or a colleague may provide you with information about demonstration of competencies. You should record these and negotiate with your student any further evidence you believe you require.

- **What should I tell my student about moderation ?**

All students should be informed about the moderation aspect of the credential, along with all the other information they require about the standards and the requirements and processes of credentialling. This will enable them to act as an equal partner in their own learning - for example, in deciding on suitable assessment tasks - and give them greater insight into what the credential comprises.

- **What happens if the material from my organisation does not appear to reflect the agreed interpretation of the standards, at the external regional moderation session ?**

In the first instance it will be up to you and your colleagues to check up on your assessment practices and understandings of the credential standards, modifying practice if necessary. You will be able to discuss this with other colleagues. If the problem recurs you can request advice from other colleagues, providers, staff of Regional Councils of ACFE or the accrediting body.

5. MODERATION AND ASSESSMENT

Ongoing assessment

Ongoing assessment occurs routinely throughout a program or course, its purpose is to assess progress and plan further learning.

When planning work, teachers/tutors/trainers need to design opportunities for students to **acquire, refine** and **become independently competent** in each element in the module. In designing on-course assessment activities they will provide the opportunity for the student to demonstrate his or her progress toward attainment of the skill in relation to the standard required. Students will obviously develop levels of standards attainment at varying points and at different paces throughout a course.

Routine ongoing assessment will normally reveal the need for continued learning and practice of skills to attain the required standard. Sometimes it will also reveal competent independent attainment of the skills at the standard defined. When the latter occurs this should be recorded as evidence in support of a credential claim.

Assessment for credentialling purposes

Assessment for student for the purpose of recording "competence" within the CGE for Adults - that is, to enable a student to be issued with a credential - can also take place at any point in a program, **when the teacher and student judge that the student can successfully and independently demonstrate the competence**. Both teacher and student should be confident that the skill can be transferred to a new context. The main concern is to ensure that all performance criteria for each element or elements have been met and that, within individual modules and within the credential stream, all elements have been demonstrated.

To award the credential it will be necessary to record evidence of the student having demonstrated the standards a sufficient number of times and/or in a range of contexts to imply independence and capacity for transferring the skills to new situations, eg in the workplace or in personal life. This may be done by collating the record of any independent achievement to a specific standard, derived from an on-course assessment, and/or carrying out specific assessment tasks, designed to provide necessary evidence required of competent performance.

In most instances, collating evidence to support the student's claim to the credential is most easily and conveniently carried out by the design and completion of specific assessment tasks, which should be built into or arise naturally out of the program, rather than being "tagged on" in an artificial way. Other sources of evidence of competency are colleagues and students themselves. Students and teachers/tutors/trainers can discuss how this extra evidence can be confirmed.

Assessment Tasks

It is important that the design of tasks and the preparation of students for assessment of competence is planned to be a natural part of the learning program, for which the student is prepared and for which they have all the information. Students should have information about performance criteria, the need for independent performance and awareness of what kind of work is expected. Students and teacher together can discuss these when deciding on appropriate assessment tasks.

Tasks can:

- be simple or complex,
- cover a number of elements or only one,
- take five minutes to carry out or a number of weeks,
- be carried out alone or in a group.

While the smallest assessable unit of competency is a single element, more realistic and satisfactory assessment tasks are likely to allow the student to demonstrate a range of elements.

The key characteristic of assessment tasks designed specifically for assessment for credential award purposes is that **they enable the student to demonstrate or apply the skills to the standard and to do so independently in most circumstances**. The standard is defined by the module, element, performance criteria, and the range and conditions statement.

General principles for designing assessment task

The following outline provides a framework for designing and recording details of assessment tasks. It can be used when assessment task material is required for moderation. It identifies the key issues that teachers/tutors/trainers need to consider in task design.

- **Task** - should be defined to show how if it will provide the student with the opportunity to demonstrate the competency.
- **Competency targets** - indicate which stream(s) and element(s) the task should cover and clarify that the performance criteria can be met and have been explained to the student.
- **Range and conditions** - identify that these have been met.
- **Outcome** - provides information on what the student will produce.
- **Teacher intervention** - defines the amount (if any) of support provided.
- **Materials, resources** - clarify choice, type and availability.
- **Curriculum context** - provides information on student preparation, any specific preparation, and whether a group or individual task.

Recording formats for assessment

Teaching staff are advised to use common in-house recording formats for on-course diagnostic assessment. For purposes of securing the credential, records of "demonstration of competencies" can be kept to a minimum. This record only needs to include details of the standards reached and the date. It can be supplemented if necessary by actual work from the students' files and more detailed descriptions of activities. Material for moderation purposes can be identified by reference to this record. Students should be able, if they wish, to maintain their own record of attainment. This can help them to understand the requirements of the credential, and the conventions of assessing to specific standards. A suggested proforma for this type of record is included on Page 21: **SAMPLE PROFORMA FOR RECORDING STUDENT DEMONSTRATION OF COMPETENCY.**

It is essential for moderation purposes that the recording processes used by teaching staff are consistent and clearly understood by all participants, and that language used in recording in assessment is unambiguous and free from bias; - this relates to both instructions given to the student **and** to language used to construct reports, profiles or other records.

Assessment policy

Teachers/tutors/trainers need to be familiar with their provider's assessment policy, or common procedures and recording processes used. Using common practice helps to ensure that samples are representative. Students also need information about standard assessment practice within a provider. This will help them discuss possible assessment tasks with their teacher.

Location of assessment

Assessment can be carried out in a range of situations to suit any type or style of program, as well as with real or simulated activities.

What is the relationship between moderation and curriculum and course design ?

Moderation is **not** a system for defining what is to be taught, in other words it does not impose on the practitioner's freedom to create the curriculum that is relevant and appropriate and which integrates ongoing assessment into the learning process. But the curriculum must be designed in a way that enables the student to acquire and apply the credential standards. Moderation of assessment decisions may reveal problems in course design. In this way it can have an influence on the curriculum design process, and on the development of expectations about the style or form of outcomes. A further point that needs to be emphasized is that the integration of the curriculum needs to be maintained within the process of assessing modules and streams.

Many students will benefit from course design that allows them to acquire clusters of skills which can be assessed together.

Guidelines for preparing students for assessment for awarding credentials

The following suggestions may help in supporting students to make the best use of both learning and assessment opportunities offered during their program.

- Staff and students can design/negotiate curriculum content to suit the learners' needs, around the defined competency statements. Course design and delivery can be as varied as required so that assessment is integrated into the learning program.

- Most students when given all the information regarding the standards and the performance requirements will be able to indicate when they are ready for assessment for credentials.

- Students and teachers/tutors/trainers can negotiate assessment tasks to meet their needs.

- Students can progress at their own pace. Any number of elements can be assessed at one time.

SAMPLE PROFORMA FOR RECORDING STUDENT DEMONSTRATION OF COMPETENCY

Stream
Numerical & Mathematical Concepts **Module 1**

Progress summary **Student**

Elements *Date(s) of demonstration of competency*

Data

Interpret familiar charts and graphs

Relation & Pattern

Make connections using relationships
and patterns in number, shape, data & measurement

Number

Use natural number, practical
and everyday fractions,
and practical and everyday decimal fractions

Measurement

Use personal referents in measurement

Shape (space)

Classify shapes

6. BENCHMARK MATERIAL - ITS ROLE IN MODERATION

Benchmarks : what are they ?

Benchmarks are a point of reference used to set standards in assessment. They are agreed good examples of particular levels which arise from the moderation process. Benchmarks help clarify the standards within the credential, and illustrate how they can be demonstrated and assessed. They also identify new ways of demonstrating learning and new learning outcomes. They include:

- samples of exemplary assessment activities providing information on assessment design and how this links to demonstration of standards,
- samples of student work which show how the standards can be demonstrated in a range of contexts or in new forms, and how these can be recognised and interpreted.

Benchmarks contribute to:

- consistency and good practice in application of standards, and
- development of standards through new ways of demonstrating competencies, eg: using new media, integrating material in new ways, demonstrating competencies in new contexts.

Benchmarks are not meant to be rigid formulae to "teach to", they are dynamic materials and are likely to change over time. They should provide information and support to the teacher.

Everyone teaching in CGE for Adults programs can be involved in developing benchmarks. When designing moderation sessions, providers and regions will probably want to set up a process for identifying potential benchmarks material and for making it available in an informal "bank". There are no formally recognised benchmarks within the CGE for Adults.

In a competency based credential where the learning goals are observable and defined within the elements of competency and the performance criteria, and where performance is either competent or not, benchmarks fulfil the function of clarifying and demonstrating standards. But they can also provide clarification and support in understanding performance criteria, helping assessors distinguish the "threshold" between "competent" and "non-competent" performance.

7. GLOSSARY

Competency	What the learner can do as a result of a learning experience.
Element	One specific segment within a competency, complete in itself and separately assessable.
Module	A specific learning segment, complete in itself at a given level of understanding or skill performance.
Performance criteria	Qualify the element and specify what the learner is expected to do in demonstrating that element.
Range & Conditions	Outline the conditions that apply during learning and assessment.
Standards	The global term that refers to the competency outcomes of the credential.
Benchmark	Benchmarks are a point of reference used to clarify standards in assessment.

8. APPENDIX

MODERATION IN THE CERTIFICATES OF GENERAL EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

GUIDELINES FOR REGIONAL COUNCILS OF ADULT, COMMUNITY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

Guidelines for Regional Councils of Adult, Community and Further Education

1. Moderation Requirements

The Certificate of General Education for Adults (Foundation) 2100 LIG and the Certificate of General Education for Adults 2100 LIH were accredited in December 1992.

The accreditation document outlines interim administrative guidelines which provide the rationale and broad requirements for moderation. These are printed in Section 5, Administrative Guidelines of the *Certificates of General Education for Adults within the Victorian Adult English Languages, Literacy and Numeracy Accreditation Framework.*

> *"The accreditation of the Certificates and the awarding of the credentials are dependent upon efficient and effective provider-managed processes of moderation and verification of assessments. There will not be an external body to impose standards. The "standards" at various levels are provided by the competency statements as set out in the accreditation document. Hence the integrity of the credentials is dependent on these processes of moderation and verification of assessments. It is recognised that moderation and verification should incorporate course comparison as well as student learning profile comparisons.*
>
> *As described above it is the responsibility of the provider to employ teachers/tutors/trainers who participate in verification of assessments and moderation.*
>
> *It is expected that teachers/tutors/trainers involved in offering courses that lead to credentials meet with other teachers/trainers/tutors to compare courses, moderate and verify assessments. It is not essential for every teacher/tutor/trainer from a particular provider to attend meetings with staff from other providers but it is expected that there be some external moderation from each provider every term. Teachers/tutors/trainers within providers should also moderate and compare assessments with those involved in external moderation and verification of assessments.*
>
> *The cost of staff attendance at moderation and verification meetings should be considered a "program" cost by funding bodies. Moderation and verification of assessment are part of normal teaching duties. As a guide it is expected that each teacher will attend at least two moderation/verification meetings, either internal or external, per semester.*

Providers are requested to register their moderation needs and arrangements with Regional Councils of Adult, Community and Further Education. Staff in these offices can then disseminate information across the region about provision of courses within the framework, link providers and arrange moderation/verification meetings where appropriate." (Page 209).

2. Policy Decisions

The Adult, Community and Further Education Board has provided a guide to funding agencies by indicating that a maximum of 10% of program costs should be allocated to cover moderation for the Certificates of General Education for Adults (CGE for Adults) and that the figure should be used as a benchmark by funding agencies and program planners.

For the purposes of calculating moderation costs at a maximum of 10% of program costs, an appropriate definition of program costs would be the cost of teaching salaries (including on costs) plus educational resources required for the conduct of the course.

Regional Councils of Adult, Community and Further Education have agreed as part of their 1994 performance agreements with the Adult, Community and Further Education Board to *"establish moderation processes that are available for all providers offering the Certificates of General Education for Adults."*

3. Development of Moderation Model

The Moderation Project, funded by the Adult, Community and Further Education Board and undertaken by Victoria University of Technology in association with the Council of Adult Education, Adult Migrant Education Services and the Western Metropolitan Council of Adult, Community and Further Education has developed a moderation model after extensive consultation with the community, TAFE, statewide and private providers and Regional Councils.

The model is cognisant of the independence of providers, the need for a model that minimises the administrative workload, does not exclude smaller community providers or private providers, and does not create additional barriers for students. The model also builds on existing networks and structures.

The moderation costs benchmark of 10% of program costs should provide adequate resources for the operation of the moderation model by Regional Councils and providers.

4. The Moderation Model

The model describes principles and guidelines that are applicable across all providers including community based, TAFE, Statewide, private and industry providers.

In addition, the moderation system, through the regular examination of assessment procedures and of underlying goals and standards embodied in the credential, protects the integrity of the credential itself and meets the need for public accountability.

4.1 Principles for Moderation

The moderation model is underpinned by a number of key principles. These are:

- **Validity of assessment** - that the assessment procedures used are appropriate and assess what they are intended to assess;
- **Reliability of assessment** - that the interpretation of educational goals and standards of the CGE for Adults are consistent across the State and across all providers and
- **Fairness** - that the individual interests of students are protected by a thorough and continuous review of assessment decisions and underlying curriculum

In addition it is recognised that a degree of variation in assessments in inevitable. Moderation enables this variation to be identified and by agreement limited to what is acceptable. It can also indicate, by investigating significant variation, the need for review and possible change of educational standards or goals embodied in the credential or of underlying curriculum or course design.

4.2 Moderation Details

- Moderation costs will be calculated as a maximum of 10% of defined program costs.

- Moderation consists of **moderation procedures and processes** and **moderation for verification**.

  Moderation procedures and processes are those practices which are necessary to develop consistency in the use of benchmarks, sampling, planning of curriculum and designing assessment processes, documentation and recording. Moderation procedures and processes are common to all streams of the CGE for Adults.

  Moderation for verification is the process which ratifies the critical assessment decisions made for purposes of issuing a credential. Moderation for verification is specific to each stream of the Certificates of General Education for Adults.

- All teachers, tutors and trainers offering the CGE for Adults should participate in two hours of **moderation procedures and processes** per semester.

- Teachers, tutors and trainers offering the CGE for Adults should participate in moderation for verification which covers each stream per semester. These moderation for verification sessions will normally be between two and three hours duration. Normally the provider will issue credentials after moderation for verification.

- Moderation can be a mixture of internal and external moderation, wherever possible building on existing networks and processes. Not all teachers/tutors/trainers are expected to participate in external moderation. At least one nominee in each stream from each provider is expected to participate in external moderation.

- Moderation sessions can be conducted using a variety of delivery modes, including face to face groups, interactive television, mac-fax-duct, tele-conferences using previously circulated samples etc.

- Inter-regional statewide moderation occurs once a semester. One facilitator from each stream in each region will attend and participate in moderation of assessments on a sample basis. This statewide moderation will also include evaluation of benchmarks and make recommendations to the course monitoring and evaluation committee on variations in benchmarks. For 1994 the Adult Community and Further Education Board will support this inter-regional moderation by funding a train the trainer professional development program. It is expected that after 1994, Regional Councils of Adult, Community and Further Education will be responsible for supporting their region's involvement in this inter-regional moderation.

4.3 Providers

- Providers will register moderation needs with Regional Councils of Adult, Community and Further Education.

- Providers may participate in all or part of Regional Council of Adult, Community and Further Education moderation or, in moderation arrangements agreed to by Regional Councils.

- Providers will ensure that staff involved in the CGE for Adults will have access to the appropriate hours of moderation.

4.4 Regional Councils of Adult, Community and Further Education

- Regional Councils will register moderation needs of all providers.

- Regional Councils will establish moderation processes as appropriate.

- Regional Councils will nominate, in consultation with providers, a facilitator or convenor for each stream of the CGE for Adults.

- Regional facilitators will convene moderation sessions, collect samples and recommendations about benchmarks.

- Regional facilitators will participate in inter-regional statewide moderation once a semester.

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